



CATAWBA COUNTY

3070 11th Ave. Dr. S.E. - Hickory, North Carolina 28602 - (828) 695-5800 - Fax (828) 695-4410

Public Health

Maria Reese, MS, Media Coordinator
Ph: 828-695-5818

GLAXOSMITHKLINE APPLAUDS CATAWBA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH'S SCHOOL NURSE PROGRAM

A cooperative project involving Catawba County, its three public school districts and Catawba Valley Medical Center, which has increased the number of school nurses serving students in Catawba County, has been honored with a GlaxoSmithKline Child Health Recognition Award. Project leaders were recognized at an awards ceremony at the Research Triangle Park on September 26, 2007. (Pictured at right, from left to right, are): Chris Viehbacher, President, US Pharmaceuticals GlaxoSmithKline; Rhonda Stikeleather, School Health Charge Nurse, Catawba County Public Health; Guy Guarino, Vice President, Strategic Management and Development, Catawba Valley Medical Center; Leah Devlin, State Health Director, Jennifer McCracken, Health Services Manager, Public Health; Doug Urland, Catawba County Public Health Director; Marilyn Foote-Hudson, Executive Director, GlaxoSmithKline Foundation; and Michael Clements, NC Public Health Association President.



The GlaxoSmithKline Child Health Recognition Awards are designed to showcase exceptional and innovative programs that improve the lives of North Carolina's children. This year's awards focused on outstanding collaborative programs that affect the health of children, with a special emphasis on unique strategies for prevention and management of chronic conditions that disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minority children and youth. The awards also spotlight programs that combat childhood obesity, promote healthy pregnancies, and treat asthma or teen depression.

Catawba County Public Health's School Nurse Program Expansion Project was named winner of the Local Health Department Recognition Award for developing an innovative program producing measurable, sustainable outcomes. This collaborative community-wide approach to student health care was sparked by Catawba Valley Medical Center and other community leaders who used a strategic planning process to recommend more school nurses, and a program funded by grants and local investments to create new school nurse positions. Adding much-needed school nurses set the stage for much better health outcomes for Catawba County students, including addressing different aspects of health and education such as school meals and nutrition, physical education, health services, counseling/psychological/mental health services, staff wellness and parent/community partnerships.

A strong partnership between Catawba County Public Health, Catawba Valley Medical Center, the county's three public school districts, and the Catawba County Board of Commissioners is allowing an increased emphasis on the health and wellness of our school children. More importantly, investing in our young people now will most likely decrease health care costs in the future and lead to a healthier community.

"This community collaboration is a model for communities across the state that want to

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improve health and student readiness,” said J. Anthony Rose, President & CEO of Catawba Valley Medical Center. “Only through a unified vision, innovative thinking and true collaboration between all partners, could these accomplishments be possible.”

“School nurses play an important role in the management of communicable diseases, by ensuring that all students are immunized and healthy and by managing the spread of disease,” said Rhonda Stikeleather, School Health Nurse Supervisor. “The school nurse wears many hats in his/her job and is oftentimes pulled in many different directions, however they will all agree that the role they fill is a very rewarding one. To see a student excel is wonderful and fulfilling, and knowing you are a part of that success is priceless.”

For more information on the Catawba County Public Health School Health Program, contact Rhonda Stikeleather at 828-695-5893 or visit www.catawba.k12.nc.us/schoolpages/ballscrew/lheffelfinger/index.htm.

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